

# Inkle Pouches

for all weavers—high-tech *and* low

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*I'll be the first to admit that I'm not a high-tech person—the vast array of electronic conveniences just doesn't hold the appeal for me that it does for my family and friends. Consequently, an obvious use for this project escaped me until a technology-oriented weaving friend suggested that it would make a great container for (and add a handwoven touch to) a cell phone, an MP3 player, or a PDA. If you are like me, you can use it for a little purse, carrying needed items when you want your hands free.*

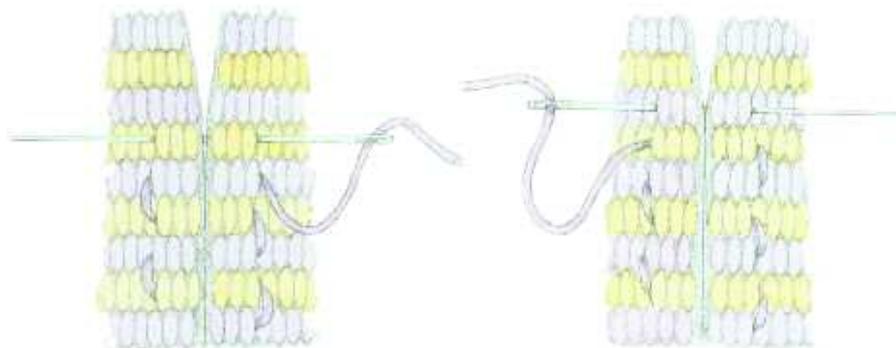
It all started the day my six-year-old daughter Bryn asked me to make her a “little purse.” Having woven yards of inkle bands over the years, I hypothesized that if I joined the edges of two bands, the doubled width would be just the right size for a small coin purse. After some experimental folding with a double-width band, I came up with a design for a no-waste, two-pocket purse with a flap—thrifty and definitely low tech!

## Designing your own pouch

To determine the size needed for a high-tech version of my daughter's coin purse, I borrowed my son's PDA and my husband's cell phone to take their measurements. I then planned a stripe design for an inkle band half as wide as I needed the finished piece to be. This pouch has a smaller front pocket than the original purse—just right for a driver's license, credit card, earbuds, or a quick reference guide to whatever electronic gizmo you put in the larger pocket!



*Amy Abbott of Tulsa, Oklahoma, tries to keep things simple, sometimes a challenge when you are a mom, an art teacher, and an Irish fiddler.*



1. The edges of two inkle bands are joined and sewn together by hand.

To custom design your own pouch: Measure the width of the item you want to put into it, including its thickness. The width of the finished inkle band will need to be half this measured width (since you are joining two bands to make it). Then take the tape measure around the item lengthwise. The length of the band needs to be twice as long as this measurement plus allowances for the flap (about 8") and the front pocket (5–6").

If you design your own stripe sequence, keep in mind that the stripes in the band will form only half of the pouch and two of them will be joined together.

## Assembling the pouch

An important part of the success in making wider items out of joined inkle bands

is the way you sew the bands together. The seam of my first bag was a little more obvious than I wanted, so for this one I used a technique from Helene Bress's *Inkle Weaving* (see Resources), which produces a neater, nearly invisible join (see Figure 1 above and Step 5, page 3).

To hide the side seams, I stitched to them a length of tubular woven inkle-band like those used for shoelaces in an article by Judy Edelkind (see Resources). It makes a neat, decorative edge for the bag and also acts as a handy strap.

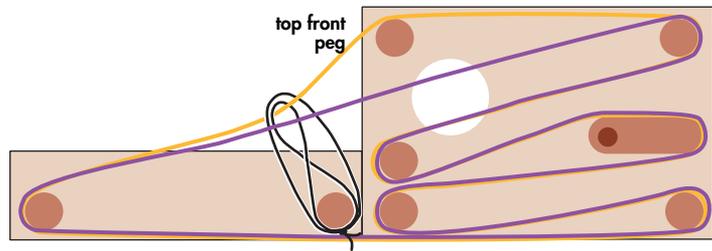
## Resources

Bress, Helene. *Inkle Weaving*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975, p. 150.  
Edelkind, Judy. “Weekend Weaver: Have Loom Will Travel,” *Handwoven*, May/June 2004, pp. 64–66.



# STEPS FOR WEAVING AND SEWING THE INKLE POUCH

**Step 1** Make 55 double-length heddles to fit your inkle loom. (A quick way to warp an inkle loom with an open side is to use heddles that are added *after* the warp is wound on the loom. Heddles for this method are pieces of fine strong thread such as 40/2 linen or #30 crochet cotton tied end-to-end to make a loop double the length of the usual heddle loop. One end of the loop is placed on the heddle peg and the other is brought up between two unthreaded warp ends, passed over the end to be threaded in the heddle, back down between the same two unthreaded ends, and placed on the heddle peg; see Figure 2.) Experiment by tying one heddle loop to determine the exact length for your loom and then tie 55 total double-length loops.



2. Double-looped heddles

**Step 2** Wind 109 warp threads 60" long on the inkle loom following the color order in Figure 5 (or a color sequence of your own design): Take the first thread and all odd-numbered warp threads over the top front peg (these are the threads that will be placed in a heddle). Take the second thread and all even-numbered warp threads under the top front peg (these threads will not be placed in a heddle). After the warp is on the loom, install the heddle loops: For each warp thread that goes over the top front peg, place a heddle loop on the heddle peg and take it over the warp thread and back down to the heddle peg. Make sure there is a warp thread going under the top front peg between all threads encircled by a heddle.

**Step 3** Weave the inkle band in warp-faced plain weave until it measures 41" (or other measurement suitable for your project), drawing in the weft carefully so that the band is 2" wide (or your chosen width). The challenge is to beat each pick of the band as consistently as possible since the design meets where the selvages are joined and the picks must be perfectly aligned. Aim for 8 picks per inch; measure carefully as you go.

**Step 4** Remove the band from the loom. At the midpoint between the two ends, fold both ends toward each other so

the inside selvages abut, forming a flat triangle at the midpoint; see Figure 3. To join the selvage (see Figure 1, page 1): Thread a tapestry needle with the weft yarn. (The first few rows anchor the thread.) Beginning on the right band 3 weft rows below the point of the triangle on the outside of the flap (see Figure 3) insert the needle from right to left under 3 warp ends from the left selvage, then under the first 3 warp ends of the same row on the left band. Pull the needle through, leaving a short tail. In the second row from the flap, insert the needle from left to right under the last 3 warp ends to the left of the join and the first 3 warp ends to the right of it. Move to the first row from the flap and insert the needle from right to left under 6 warp ends (3 from the right band and 3 from the left). Now work back in the same way through the 3 rows you just did and continue for the rest of the band, working alternately from left to right and right to left. To secure the stitching at the other end, take the needle back through the last 2 rows a second time.

**Step 5** Bind the raw edges with 1/4" double-fold bias tape to keep them from raveling (a turned hem will be bulky). Fold the pouch so that the outside back dimensions are 4" x 5" and the short inside front pocket is about 2 1/2" deep; see the photos on pages 2 and 4 and the side view in Figure 4 (or choose dimensions that fit your design).

**Step 6** Sew up the sides with an overcast stitch, making sure the thread goes through all layers (there will be four layers where there are two pockets).

**Step 7** For the flap closure: With a tapestry needle, insert a length of elastic cord through the point of the pouch flap (or

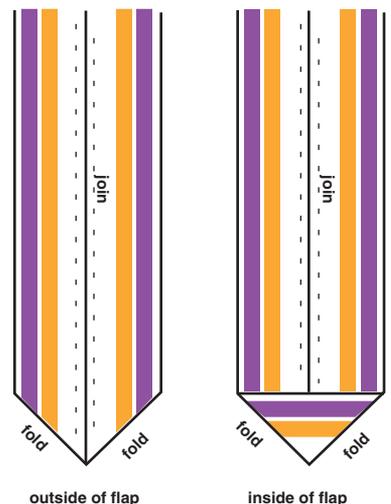
just poke the elastic through) so that the cords emerge 1–2 picks to the right and left of the tip. Allow enough cord to stretch over your button closure, turn the tip of the flap inside out, and knot the ends of the cord together. Turn the tip right side out. Sew the button to the front of the pouch.

**Step 8** For the strap, wind a second warp of 9 ends 65" long on the inkle loom following the color order in Figure 6. Weave the cord for the strap using the tubular method: Insert the shuttle into each shed from the same side, tightening the weft loops as you go to draw the selvages together into a tube. Knot the ends, leaving a tassel of unwoven ends about 1 1/2" long. Trim the ends evenly to about 1".

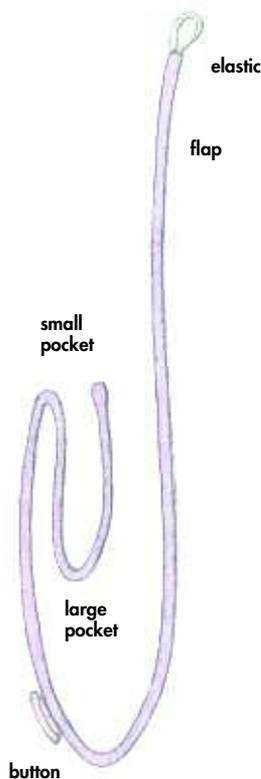
**Step 9** Whipstitch the ends of the cord over the side seams to make the strap, placing the knotted tassels at the bottom of the bag.

**Step 10** Insert your choice of portable electronic marvels (or pocket change and ID card) and go on your way!

## 3. Folding the band and joining the selvages



#### 4. Profile of pouch construction



#### 5. Color order for pouch

	4x-18x		4x		4x-9x		
38	11		1			1	1
52	7	1	1	1	6	1	1
19	7	1		1	1	1	1
109							

■ Purple Passion #142  
■ Old Gold #29  
■ Dark Fuchsia #56

#### 6. Color order for strap

3	3					
3		1	2			
3		2	1			
9						

■ Purple Passion #142  
■ Old Gold #29  
■ Dark Fuchsia #56

## PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

### Weave structures for pouch and strap

Warp-faced plain weave for the pouch and warp-faced tubular plain weave for the strap.

### Equipment

Inkle loom that can accommodate a 2" weaving width; 1 stick shuttle; tapestry needle; sewing needle.

### Yarns

Warp: 5/2 pearl cotton (2,100 yd/lb), Purple Passion #142, 70 yd (⅓ oz); Old Gold #29, 93 yd (⅓ oz); Dark Fuchsia #56, 38 yd (⅓ oz).  
 Weft: 5/2 pearl cotton (2,100 yd/lb),

Purple Passion #142, 27 yd (⅓ oz).

### Notions and supplies

Sewing thread; about 6" of ¼" double-fold bias tape to bind raw edges; 3" length of round elastic; 1⅞" button.

### Sources for yarns and materials

UKI 5/2 pearl cotton is available from most weaving retailers and sewing notions are available from fabric stores.

### Warp order and length

Warp for the pouch body: 109 ends 60" long following the color order in Figure 5 (allows 19" for loom waste and take-up).

Warp for the strap: 9 ends 65" long following Figure 6; allows 7" loom waste.

### Warp and weft spacing

Warp: 54–55 epi. Weaving width: 2" for pouch strip; ¼" for strap.  
 Weft: 8 ppi. Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 40½" for body of pouch; 58" for cord strap.

### Finished dimensions

Amounts produce one inkle band 2" × 40½" (joined to make a fabric 4" × 20¼" for the body of the pouch) and one tubular cord ¼" × 58" for the strap.